

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

OPIC-03 AF-06 SAJ-01 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-05

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R 041242Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8454

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 06543

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO, FR

SUBJECT: SAUVAGNARGUES VISIT TO PORTUGAL

REF: (A) PARIS 4501, (B) LISBON 1318, (C) LISBON 1338

L. SUMMARY: QUAI PORTUGUESE DESK OFFICER DEBENEST, WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED SAUVAGNARGUES TO LISBON, SUBSTANTIALLY CONFIRMS ACCOUNT THIS VISIT REPORTED REF C. END SUMMARY.

2. DEBENEST ADDED FOLLOWING NUANCES: SAUVAGNARGUES DELIVERED PERSONAL LETTER FROM GISCARD UNDERLINING FRENCH INTEREST IN PORTUGAL, AGREEING TO VISIT IN PRINCIPLE, BUT AVOIDING ISSUE OF DATE. (COMMENT: WHY CONFIDENTIAL

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GISCARD IS STALLING IS NOT YET CLEAR. DEBENEST CLAIMS

IT IS HIS CALENDAR AND THE FACT THAT SITUATION IN PORTUGAL IS NO LONGER AS URGENT. WE SPECULATE THAT GISCARD MAY, IF POSSIBLE, PREFER TO VISIT MADRID FIRST.)

3. SAUVAGNARGUES WAS ALSO ABLE INFORM PORTUGUESE THAT DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN IN PRINCIPLE TO OFFER GOP SOME BILATERAL ECONOMIC AID AS A RESULT INTERNAL FRENCH POLICY REVIEW DESCRIBED IN EARLIER TELS. GOP WAS TOLD FRENCH WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR PROJECT AND/OR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS ASSISTANCE, BUT THAT PORTUGUESE WOULD HAVE TO COME UP WITH SPECIFICS. IN EITHER CASE, DEBENEST SAID, LEVEL OF FRENCH AID THIS YEAR WOULD BE MODEST, IMPLYING THAT AN INCREASE NEXT YEAR SHOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED. DETAILS TO BE WORKED OUT IN UPCOMING CONTACTS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES' FINANCE AND ECONOMIC MINISTERS.

4. OTHER PRINCIPAL ISSUE WAS ANGOLA AND AFRICA AS WHOLE. ACCORDING DEBENEST ANTUNES ARGUED THAT NETO WAS INTERESTED IN RECOVERING A NON-ALIGNED POSITION, DID NOT INTEND TO LEAD AN AFRICAN "LIBERATION" MOVEMENT, AND STRESSED THAT IT WAS THEREFORE IMPORTANT TO GIVE HIM THE MEANS TO DO SO. THIS MEANT SOME NON-COMMUNIST ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL PRESENCE AND SUPPORT TO BALANCE SOVIET AND OTHER COMMUNIST PROJECTS. DEBENEST AVOIDED QUESTION AS TO SAUVAGNARGUES' REPLY. HOWEVER, SHE SAID FRENCH AND PORTUGUESE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY "WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER ON AFRICAN MATTERS IN WHICH THEY HAVE COMMON INTEREST."

5. AS FOR SPAIN, DEBENEST CONFIRMED PORTUGUESE WILLINGNESS AGREE TO SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. PORTUGUESE ALSO REITERATED THEIR DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THEIR NEIGHBOR, REGARDLESS OF DIRECTION WHICH POLITICAL EVENTS IN SPAIN MAY TAKE. HOWEVER PORTUGUESE WERE, ON WHOLE, OPTIMISTIC THAT THE EVOLUTION IN SPAIN SO FAR WAS STILL ON TRACKS.

6. DEBENEST CONFIRMED AGREEMENT TO ANNUAL FRENCH-PORTUGUESE POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS AT MINISTERIAL AND POLITICAL DIRECTORS' LEVELS, SPACED SO AS TO ASSURE A CONFIDENTIAL

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MEETING EVERY SIX MONTHS.

7. AS REGARDS PORTUGUESE INTERNAL SITUATION, FRENCH RETURNED WITH FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS. A RIGHT-WING COUP SEEMS UNLIKELY FOR TIME BEING, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE RIGHT IS LIKELY TO DO QUITE WELL IN THE APRIL ELECTIONS. CHOICE OF NEXT PRESIDENT IS STILL GENUINELY UP IN AIR AND QUAI SO FAR SEES NO FRONT RUNNERS. HOWEVER TEXT OF

AGREEMENT BETWEEN REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND THE PARTIES
DOES SUGGEST IMPLICITLY THAT PRESIDENT WILL BE MILITARY
MAN.

8. DEBENEST SUMMED VISIT UP AS USEFUL, THE ATMOSPHERE
AS VERY GOOD, AND SET STAGE FOR RESUMPTION MORE ACTIVE
FRENCH-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS.
RUSH

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